DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 247 513 CG 017 675

AUTHOR George, William H.; Marlatt, G. Alan
TITLE Alcohol-Outcome Expectancies: Predicting Interest in Violence and Erotica.
PUB DATE Apr 83
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Psychological Association (63rd, San Francisco, CA, April 16-20, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Patterns; College Students; *Drinking; *Expectation; Higher Education; Males; *Predictor Variables; *Sexuality; *Violence

ABSTRACT

Although research has examined the content of alcohol-outcome expectancies and also the role of alcohol use in aggressive and sexual behaviors, few studies have linked the two lines of inquiry. To examine the efficacy of outcome expectancies for predicting actual behavior, 64 male social drinkers, aged 21 to 25 years, completed questionnaires and, three to five days later, participated in an experimental session. The questionnaires assessed personal effects of alcohol as well as hostility and sex guilt. Subjects were divided into two groups: "expect-alcohol" and "expect-tonic." The groups were divided again into those who received tonic only and those who actually received the alcohol (one part vodka to five parts tonic). During the sequenced experimental session, subjects first interacted with a confederate, then consumed enough alcohol (or placebo) to become moderately intoxicated, and then rated four types of stimulus slides at their own pace. The slides depicted violence, mild erotica, violent erotica, and neutral scenery. Unobstrusive recordings were made of the time spent viewing and rating each slide. An analysis of the results showed that pre-existing expectations regarding the psychosocial effects of alcohol consumption had a clear influence on overt behavior. Specifically, expectations that alcohol enhanced aggressiveness, disinhibition, and euphoria led to increased viewing of violent and deviant slide materials, for subjects who believed that their drinks contained alcohol. In contrast, these alcohol-outcome expectancies were not predictive of viewing times for subjects who did not expect alcoholic drinks. These findings are consistent with a cognitive social learning perspective, which would support a direct link between expectancies and post-consumption behavior. (BL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED247513

ALCOHOL-OUTCOME EXPECTANCIES: PREDICTING INTEREST IN VIOLENCE AND EROTICA

William H. George
G. Alan Marlatt
University of Washington

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

William H. George

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CG017675

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA, April 6-10, 1983.

Alcohol-Outcome Expectancies: Predicting Interest in Violence and Erotica

(Poster presentation WPA Conference, 1983 - San Francisco)

William H. George and G. Alan Marlatt

University of Washington

Findings from a number of investigations suggest that alcohol use can facilitate the expression of behaviors related to aggression and sexuality. Empirical trends from both correlational and experimental research attest to this relationship. For example, studies by Taylor and his colleagues demonstrate that increasing doses of alcohol heighten laboratory aggression in male subjects (Shuntich and Taylor, 1972; Taylor and Gammon, 1975). Traditional interpretations of these data attributed such facilitation to the pharmacological action of alcohol on various brain centers. However, two recent veins of research underscore the role of cognitive processes in mediating the relationship between alcohol consumption and various forms of psychosocial "misbehavior".

First, experiments using the balanced placebo design to partition the psychologic and physiologic effects of alcohol demonstrate that, at low dosage levels, perceived alcohol ingestion can exert a stronger influence on behavior than actual ingestion. In these studies, male subjects who expect to receive alcoholic drinks evidence greater aggression (Lang et al., 1975), sexual arousal to deviant (Briddell et al., 1978) and non-deviant erotica (Wilson and Lawson, 1976), and ad lib exposure to violent-erotica (note 1). By contrast, subjects who expect non-alcoholic drinks do not exhibit comparable increases. The actual content of the drinks has no effect, in these studies. To explain such findings, the researchers have argued that experienced drinkers expect alcohol to produce certain behavioral outcomes. According to this position, following actual or, in this case, perceived alcohol consumption, these alcohol-outcome expectancies function as self-fulfilling prophecies. However, the

actual content of these proposed expectancies remained tentative. In fact, speculations about their content are typically derived from the behavioral outcomes they presumably explain.

In contrast, a second line of investigation focuses on assessing the content of alcohol-outcome expectancies, but fails to link these with behavioral measures of post-consumption outcomes. Typically, these studies employ self-report questionnaires that require subjects to describe their intoxication experiences using a series of bipolar adjectives. Using factor analytic methods, these researchers (Brown et al., 1980; Southwick et al., 1981; and Christiansen et al., 1982) are demonstrating that social drinkers expect increased pleasure, interpersonal power and assertiveness, and decreased tension with low to moderate levels of drinking.

An aim of the present investigation was to bridge these two empirical trends by demonstrating the efficacy of outcome expectancies for predicting actual behavior. To date it appears that no investigations have directly examined this possibility. The specific behavior examined here is ad lib viewing of violence and erotica.

Method

Alcohol expectancy (expect alcohol vs. expect tonic), alcohol content (receive alcohol vs. receive tonic), and anger provocation (provoked vs. unprovoked) were factorially crossed in a 2 X 2 X 2 experimental design. The main dependent measures were the amounts of time that each subject spent viewing four types of stimulus slides: violence, mild erotica, violent-erotica, and neutral scenery.

Sixty-four male moderate social drinkers between the ages of 21 and 25 were recruited from a college population to participate in an "experiment investigating the effects of alcohol on subjective judgment". Subjects were paid five dollars for their participation in a questionnaire and an experimental session.

Alcohol-outcome expectancies were assessed in the pre-experimental questionnaire session conducted 3-5 days prior to the experimental session. The expectancy

questionnaire consisted of two parts. Each part requested the subject to use nineteen bipolar adjectives (5 point scale) to describe how alcohol typically affects him under moderate (part 1) and heavy (part 2) intoxication. Questionnaires assessing demographic information, hostility, and sex guilt were also adminstered during this session.

For the experimental session, each subject was run individually by two blind assistants. Upon arrival, the subject underwent a staged interaction with a confederate posing as a "partner" subject who ostensibly would undergo the same procedures in a separate laboratory. Later, this interaction and an apparent exchange of biographical information were used in the provocation manipulation as the basis for evaluative feedback from the partner. Drinks containing vodka and tonic or just tonic were administered in accordance with the balanced placebo design, such that half the subjects in both expect alcohol and expect tonic conditions actually received alcohol (1 part vodka to 5 parts tonic). Dosage was sufficient to produce a state of moderate intoxication (target B.A.C. = .040). Finally, the subject was instructed to view and rate, at his own pace, a series of 24 slides. The slides were arranged into six trials, with one slide of each type per trial. The order of the trials was randomly determined as was the order of the slides within each trial. Unobtrusive recordings were made of the amount of time spent viewing and rating each slide.

Results

The effects of alcohol expectancy, alcohol content, and anger provocation on ad lib viewing time have been reported elsewhere (note 1). This presentation focuses on the relationship between pre-experimental alcohol-outcome expectancies and viewing times.

The nineteen items that subjects used to describe their expectations regarding the effects of moderate intoxication were subjected to a principle component factor

analysis with varimax rotation. The resulting three factor solution indicated three subsets of items. The content of items in these subsets suggested the following factor labels: aggressiveness, euphoria, and disinhibition. The items and factor loadings are presented in table 1. Next, scale scores for each of these factors were computed by adding the raw scores for each item subset and dividing by the number of items.

Multiple regression analyses were performed to determine the efficacy of these scale scores for predicting subjects' viewing times for the various slides. Separate regression analyses were conducted for the expect alcohol and expect tonic subjects. For expect alcohol subjects, simultaneous entry of the scale scores into the regression equation resulted in significant overall F values for two dependent measures: average viewing time for the violent slides ($F = 5.94$, $p \leq .003$) and average viewing time for the six slides (3 violent and 3 violent-erotic) rated by subjects as the most deviant ($F = 3.31$, $p \leq .035$). These results are summarized in table 2 and reveal that the aggressiveness and disinhibition factors were more potent predictors than the euphoria factor. As anticipated, these pre-experimental expectancies were not predictive of viewing behavior for subjects who did not expect to receive alcohol.

Discussion

These results demonstrate that pre-existing expectations regarding the psychosocial effects of alcohol consumption have a clear influence on overt behavior. Specifically, expectations that alcohol enhances aggressiveness, disinhibition, and euphoria led to increased viewing of violent and deviant slide materials, for subjects who believed that their drinks contained alcohol. In contrast, these alcohol-outcome expectancies were not predictive of viewing times for subjects who did not expect alcoholic drinks. These findings are consistent with earlier research showing that perceived alcohol ingestion increases aggressiveness and sexual responsivity in males and that seasoned drinkers harbor expectations that are congruent with these

effects. However, these investigations either failed to assess a priori expectations or failed to measure behavioral outcomes of consumption.

The current results extend these earlier findings by demonstrating a direct link between expectancies and post-consumption behavior. Moreover, they further support a cognitive social learning analysis of alcohol's impact on psychosocial behavior, which contends that behavioral outcomes are not entirely determined by pharmacological factors, but are instead largely mediated by subjective belief systems. According to this perspective, cultural forces as well as direct and vicarious experiences with alcohol shape alcohol-outcome expectancies. In turn, perceived ingestion of alcohol activates these expectancies; thereby facilitating and guiding overt behavior.

Reference Notes

1. George, W. H. and Marlatt, G. A. The effects of alcohol expectancy, alcohol content, and anger provocation on ad lib exposure to violent and sexual stimuli, poster presented at Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy, Los Angeles, CA., November, 1982.

References

Briddell, D. W., Rimm, D. C., Caddy, G. R., Krawitz, G., Sholis, D., and Wunderlin, R. J. Effects of alcohol and cognitive set on sexual arousal to deviant stimuli. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1978, 87, 4, 418-430.

Brown, S. A., Goldman, M. S., Inn, A., and Anderson, L. R. Expectations of reinforcement from alcohol: Their domain and relation to drinking patterns. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1980, 48, 419-426.

Christiansen, B. A., Goldman, M. S., and Inn, A. Development of alcohol related expectancies in adolescents: Separating pharmacological from social learning influences. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1982, 50, 336-344.

Lang, A. R., Goeckner, D. J., Adesso, V. J., and Marlatt, G. A. Effects of alcohol on aggression in male social drinkers. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1975, 84, 509-518.

Shuntich, R. J., and Taylor, S. P. Physical aggression as a function of alcohol and pain feedback. Journal of Social Psychology, 1980, 110, 235-244.

Southwick, L., Steele, C., Marlatt, G. A., and Lindell, M. Alcohol-related expectancies: Defined by phase of intoxication and drinking experience. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1981, 49, 713-721.

Taylor, S. P., and Gammon, C. B. Effects of type and dose of alcohol on human physical aggression. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1975, 32, 169-175.

Wilson, G. T., and Lawson, D. M. Expectancies, alcohol and sexual arousal in male social drinkers. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1976, 85, 587-594.

For further information contact:

William H. George, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, NI-25
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195

Table 1

Scale Items and Factor Loadings

	Loading
Aggressiveness	
Likelihood of getting more angry (Less/More)	.737
Likelihood of getting into a fight (Less/More)	.606
Likelihood of arguing (Less/More)	.394
Sexual performance (Worse/Better)	-.399
Euphoria	
Sad/Happy	.638
Likely to get depressed (Less/More)	-.802
Disinhibition	
Sexual desire (Less/More)	.427
Uninhibited/Inhibited	-.637
Concern about a task (Less/More)	-.443
Sexually inhibited (Less/More)	-.612

Table 2

Regression Analyses

1. D.V. = Average viewing for six violent slides

Factor	Beta	R^2	Overall F	Prob.
Aggressiveness	.516	.139	5.94	.003
Disinhibition	-.419	.312		
Euphoria	-.289	.389		

2. D.V. = Average viewing time for the six most deviant slides

Factor	Beta	R^2	Overall F	Prob.
Aggressiveness	.435	.098	3.305	.035
Disinhibition	-.318	.198		
Euphoria	-.262	.263		